



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/peace-corps-volunteers-worldwide-work-eradicate-hunger-and-increase-food-security>

Peace Corps Volunteers Worldwide Work to Eradicate Hunger and Increase Food Security

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Peace Corps volunteers help communities around the world secure a healthy and reliable food supply, address shortages of clean water, and reduce malnutrition. Today on World Food Day, celebrated annually on Oct. 16, the Peace Corps recognizes volunteers who are helping to eradicate hunger and increase food security at the grassroots level. Below is the story of one volunteer who is promoting nutrient-rich crop production in his Peruvian community.

Peace Corps volunteer Michael Mazotti of San Jose, California, has developed a large-scale organic waste management system that is not only keeping his community in Peru clean but also generating nutrient-rich composted fertilizer for his community's crop gardens, fruit trees and grass. By adding slow-release nutrients to the crops, the rich fertilizer is fostering expanded crop growth.

Mazotti is currently producing more than 1,100 pounds of compost weekly through a process called vermicomposting – a fast, non-hazardous way to turn organic waste into high-quality, natural fertilizer using worms.

"What started as a tiny worm bed grew 1,000 percent in the first year," said Mazotti, a graduate of San Jose State University who has been living in Peru since 2012. "We were shocked at how successful the process was."

Located along the northwestern coast of Peru, Mazotti's community is home to unique ecosystems and archeological centers and attracts thousands of tourists each year. To manage the buildup of inorganic waste brought in by the influx of visitors, the local government established a recycling program, but Mazotti and his local counterpart noticed that organic waste was still accumulating.

"I went on a hunt for ideas on how to dispose of a sizable amount of organic waste efficiently," Mazotti said. "I first focused on regular composting but became discouraged when I saw how much space and time this method would require. Then I saw an online article about vermicomposting and worms' ability to eat away at waste quickly as a method of organic waste management."

Mazotti and his local counterpart purchased supplies to build their first worm bed and filled it with organic waste from the market. When they realized how quickly the worms were able to convert waste into fertilizer, they began working with local farmers and merchants to expand the system.

"Once the program begins to produce more natural fertilizer than can be used in my community, the government will begin to offer it for sale. It is quite amazing how sustainable this project ended up being."

Volunteers across Peace Corps' six project sectors promote food security in their communities. The Peace Corps is one of eleven federal departments and agencies contributing to the U.S. government's global hunger and food security initiative, Feed the Future. More than 1,200 Peace Corps volunteers have played a role in taking important food security messaging and practices to the grassroots level.

This release originally [appeared](#) on the Peace Corps website.

More from World Food Day 2014:

- [10 Reasons We're Sweet on Sweet Potatoes and Why You Should Be Too!](#)
- [Secretary Kerry's Statement on World Food Day 2014](#)
- [Secretary's Column: Family Farmers Do More Than Feed the World](#)

- [On World Food Day, a Story of Restoring Potato Crops to Tanzania](#)